

The IAM District 190

Sparkplug



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Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

Union at Boeing stands up for safety and airplane quality

What happens when you work for a mighty company producing an iconic and vital product used globally, and you see that product start falling apart when used? As an employee and as a union member, do you have a say? Can you make a change in the corporate culture to ensure that your product is as great as it used to be?

That's the question for the 32,000 members of IAM District 751, who work at Boeing. And it is likely a question many IAM members have faced at one time or another working for companies, large and small, that start veering from their mission.

"What happens at Boeing has ripple effects across the entire industry," says District 190 Directing Business Rep Don Crosatto. "Two of our larger employers, Henkel in Pittsburg and Applied Aerospace in Stockton are both Boeing subcontractors. District 751's fight in Washington is our fight as well."

From quality to profits

It wasn't that long ago that Boeing's reputation was that of a staid industrial giant, known for building the safest, most advanced planes in the sky. It helped introduce the world to commercial jet travel.

In the 1990s, 51 major American defense and aerospace contractors became just five huge companies of which Boeing was one. In 1997, Boeing merged with McDonnell Douglas. While Boeing had a reputation as a company run by people with engineering backgrounds who cared about quality and safety first, some say the merger put the com-

pany in the hands of executives with a finance background, whose priority was profits.

Over the next several years, the company opened a non-union factory in South Carolina to build the 787 Dreamliners and then closed a similar line in the unionized plant. But, as the union predicted, less-skilled labor at the non-union plant led to quality problems and costly halts in deliveries.

Since January, quality of Boeing planes has hit rock bottom. Just a few examples include: the loss of an incorrectly installed door plug, loose or missing bolts, wheels that have fallen off. All this follows the most serious events—two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019 that left 346 people dead. No wonder the meme "If it's Boeing, I'm not going" has gone viral.

Using contract talks to make change

On March 8, IAM District 751 opened talks for their first full new contract since 2010. (There had been a contract re-opener in 2014 when the company snatched away the defined-benefit pension.)

"It's very important to us that we build a safe, quality airplane," President and DBR of District 751 Jon Holden said at a news conference the day the talks opened. "We are taking the opportunity to negotiate beyond standard line items like pay and retirement benefits, which we also want. But we want a real say in quality and safety standards."

As part of that effort, the union wants a seat on Boeing's board of directors, making it the second labor union in recent months to try for this.

"We will be making proposals that we have never made in the past around safety and quality of the airplane. In today's times, we have to look in the mirror ourselves, to protect this company from itself. We have to protect whistleblowers



and have the ability to stand up and say 'This is wrong.' We'll also make proposals to codify that in contract language," Holden stated.

"We have to ensure we have work for our current members and those who follow behind us. We'll be focusing on the next airplane programs – we need jobs for 50 years, not just four years," Holden said.

He also said that the union is pushing for higher pay "because our members need higher pay. But not just them. We need to attract and keep new people in this industry."

Alongside better pay and conditions, Holden said he also wants a different sort of long-term commitment from Boeing, pressing the company to build its next generation of aircraft in Washington.

"Right now we feel we have leverage that is better than any time in our history. We're going to use that and our members want to use that," he said.

"We believe in ourselves. There is no Boeing company without us. Our reputation is intricately linked to the reputation of the Boeing company, and that's because we are the Boeing Company," said Holden. "It is our members —mothers and fathers, grandparents, and kids who have spent generations in these factories building the world's best airplanes, and we will continue our fight to protect that legacy at all costs."



MOVING?

Or need to report a member recently deceased...

Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your local union office. Please note: If you send your notice to the Pension Fund or the Health and Welfare Trust, that won't change your address as the union has it. Be sure to contact your local union!

See calendar on Page 8 for your local union's address.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Retired and active members: Please write in if something in *The Sparkplug* makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action. All letters from members will be used, space permitting. They may be edited for length or grammar, but not for content. Letters may be submitted as follows:

e-mail: dchaplan@mindspring.com
 mail: IAM District 190, 8201 Capwell Street
 Oakland, CA 94621

Get your IAM news on the web!



Visit the District 190 website at: iamdistrict190.org

The International IAM website is at: goiam.org

Local Lodge websites:

Local 1101: www.iamlocal1101.org

Local 1414: facebook.com/IAMLOCAL1414/

Twitter

Union Organizer: @union1484

Facebook pages:

Local 1101: facebook.com/

Search for IAMAW-Local 1101

Local 1546: facebook.com/iam1546

TikTok

Local 1484: Search for Mercedes Benz San Diego

The IAM District 190

Sparkplug

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Postmaster: Send address corrections to The *Sparkplug*, 8201 Capwell Street, Oakland, CA 94621.

Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor

UNION PEOPLE

Anthony Longo—Mechanic, Steward, City Councilmember

Anthony Longo has worked for PBA Maintenance in Dutch Harbor, out at the tip of the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska, and has been a Local 1546 member and steward there since 2014.

"I want to make sure that we can do our tasks safely and that we have all the right equipment for it, and that we are treated fairly," Longo says about why he stays active with the union.

Working up there

When asked about where he works, Anthony says that Dutch Harbor is a unique place. "We have vessels at the dock seven days per week during our three fishing seasons working to bring empty containers and supplies in, and to get our product off the island."

"Our island is one of the largest fishing ports in the U.S.," he explains. "Even though it's a small island by volume, we provide seafood globally." Fishing stocks go up and down, he adds. "King Crab has been struggling the last few years. Pollock and Cod are currently the main products that we are shipping." Mattson and Maersk are the main shipping lines.

"We work anywhere from 75-100 hours each week. We have five mechanics here—which is great. When I started there were only three. The union is always there for us if we have any issues. They understand that we work a lot but want to ensure that we're treated fairly."

Anthony is a working mechanic, currently standing in as foreman supervising the four guys that he works with, but that will end soon. "We do everything from the rope cages to structural welding, to fiber optic cables. At most worksites, there would be special crews who come in to do what we do, but we have to learn to do it all."

From Ohio originally, Anthony joined the Navy after high school and served for eight years. He came up to Dutch Harbor when he got out of the Navy. "I did welding, fabricating, and pipe fitting in the Navy and also gained experience as a commercial diver and underwater welder, so all of that experience transferred over."

Living up there

Anthony explains that Unalaska is both the name of the island and of the town. On the other side of the island sits Dutch Harbor, with the fishing port and industrial side. "This whole place is stuck in the 80s. You can let your kids ride their bikes 10 miles away to get to the candy store. It's a safe, good place to raise a family. I leave my keys in the truck's ignition at the airport when I go out of town."

While it sounds idyllic, Anthony adds that the island doesn't have the best medical facilities. "Plus, it's hard and expensive to get off the island.

We had to take our son to Anchorage to get new glasses; that's about a three-hour flight."

The island has about 4,000 year-round residents, and about 5-7,000 people come during the busy season. The weather is similar to Washington's. "It rains a lot, though not as much as in Seattle. It is very windy—we often have 100-150 mph windstorms come through. Our cranes can only operate in up to 50 mph winds."

In the wintertime, their part of Alaska will only see the sun from about 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. In the summertime, it's still light at 2 a.m. "The sun barely dips down before it starts coming back up," Anthony says.

Joining the City Council

Anthony was elected to a three-year term on the City Council last October. "I won't count anything out, but at this point, I'm not thinking about higher office. I'm still trying to get my sea legs on how to survive the three-hour meetings."

Anthony says he's learned a lot over the past six months in office. "Finances are a big part of it. Our biggest issue is trying to find a source of green energy." He says that the Council just canceled a contract with a company because it wasn't a good deal for the residents and the company was not reaching benchmarks. "With all the wind out here, one viable green source is to put up wind turbines. I'm not sure what direction we'll go in yet, but I want to get rid of diesel generators."

Before Anthony joined the city council, his wife served as president of the school board. "But with her job at the Public Rec Center (PRC) and my long hours and our three kids, we were getting spread a little too thin. She didn't run this go-around, but she misses it, and a lot of people miss her, so she may run again soon."

Anthony admits that he's not a political person. "I'm a mechanic who enjoys being outside and enjoys Alaska. I just want to work to ensure the growth of the city, but make sure that the city does not stray away from what it is. You can't lose who you are and make Unalaska Unalaska."

The island looks way different than it did when Anthony arrived in 2011. The Unalaska side is very family-oriented and is a great place to raise kids. The PRC has an indoor pool, weight rooms, a teen room, and pool tables, and they run softball leagues, tundra golf, and fishing tournaments. There's hiking, lake swimming, tubing, and opportunities to play outdoors.

"This is a unique spot on the earth and is a great place to visit," Anthony says. "It may not be for everyone to live here, but it's great for us."



From work to city council to out with the family: Unalaska is a great place to be.

NEWS FROM THE TRUST FUND



Annual physical required to lower deductible in 2025 under Blue Cross Self-Funded Plan options

In 2023, the Automotive Industries (AI) Board of Trustees instituted an annual physical exam requirement so that those on self-funded medical plans offered by the AI Welfare Plan can receive a lower calendar year deductible.

The deductible amounts are now in place for the 2024 calendar year, but participants and their spouse or domestic partner (if applicable) who get an annual physical exam anytime in 2024 will be moved to the lower deductible level in the 2025 calendar year, along with all dependent children.

Plan Option	Annual Calendar Year Deductible	2025 Deductible IF you and your Spouse/Registered Domestic Partner receive a physical exam in 2024	2025 Deductible IF you and your Spouse/Registered Domestic Partner do NOT receive a physical exam in 2024
Plan A	\$400/individual or \$800/family	\$200/individual, \$400/family	\$400/individual or \$800/family
Plan B		\$500/individual, \$1,500/family	\$1,000/individual or \$3,000/family
Plan C	\$1,000/individual, \$2,000/family	\$500/individual, \$1,000/family	\$1,000/individual, \$2,000/family

The physical exam can be taken any time before the end of the 2024 Calendar Year (December 31) and requires the Plan's certification form be sent to the Trust Fund Office.

Physical Exam certification forms are available to download at the Trust Fund website at www.aitrustfunds.org. A separate form must be submitted for you and your spouse or domestic partner (if applicable) to reduce your deductible for the 2025 calendar year.

If you have questions about what current deductible level you are in, please contact the Trust Fund Office at 800-635-3105 or by email at AISupport@hsba.com.

Need glasses? Use Vision Service Plan (VSP)

Collective bargaining agreements that include vision benefits under the welfare plan are provided exclusively by Vision Service Plan (VSP). The plan has contracted with VSP for many years because of their extensive network of providers. The vision plan will cover the following services for members:

- Exam every 24 months
- Lenses and frames every 24 months.
- \$25 Exam Copay (\$60 Copay for contact lens exam)
- \$130 Frame Allowance
- \$130 Elective Contact Lens Allowance

You can locate a VSP provider by going to www.vsp.com. VSP also provides an online option for ordering glasses and virtual try-on tools at www.eyeconic.com

HRA debit card confirmation letters - Why are these being mailed by the Trust Fund?

If you utilize an HRA Debit Card with your medical benefits, you probably have received a letter from the Trust Fund Office asking for additional information on services that were charged to the card. The question most asked about these letters is, "Do I really have to send the information requested into the Fund Office?"

The letter is known as a "substantiation letter" and it is being sent by the Trust Fund Office because the IRS requires the Welfare Plan to verify that all charges and purchases made using the HRA card were for an eligible medical expense (as defined by the IRS). Substantiation letters are not generated for all card transactions. They are usually generated when the amount that is paid through the card does not match the plan information. Information that is being confirmed is:

- Service Date or Purchase Date
- Description of Service/Item Purchase
- Name of Provider/Merchant
- Claim Amount

As a participant in the Plan, you are required to complete the substantiation letter and provide documents that will confirm the information required by the IRS. In most cases, the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from the medical provider or HMO will be enough information to fulfill the substantiation letter requirements.

If you have any questions about the letters or the documentation that needs to be provided, please call the Trust Office.

Pension plan searching for former participants

Currently, approximately 2,000 current or former union members who are entitled to receive pension payments under the Automotive Industries Pension Plan have not applied for their money. If you know someone who used to work in the industry during the 1970s or 1980s, is over age 65, and is not receiving a pension payment from the Trust Fund, they could be missing out on a monthly payment from the Plan. Have them contact the Trust Fund Office at 800-635-3105 for a review of their work history to see if they are eligible.

Have issues?

The Member Assistance Program can help with many life-related stresses, including relationships, work issues, grieving, bankruptcy, depression, real estate and so much more. Call the number below for confidential services and referrals.



PENSION SEMINAR

Open to all District 190 members who participate in the Automotive Industries Pension Plan!

Sat. June 1 • 9 am

At Local 1546: 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland

- ▶ If you are in the AI Pension plan and are close to retirement;
- ▶ If you want to know when & how to apply and how long the process takes;
- ▶ If you are wondering about your options for the best time to retire;
- ▶ If you want to know how to take joint survivorship —

Then this seminar is for you (and your spouse)!

Call Tanya at Local 1546 to RSVP: 510-638-6705.



*Several pension processors will be at this meeting; if we know that you plan to attend, they'll be able to pre-load your information and give you specific answers to your personal pension questions. This information is NOT available online, so if we are not expecting you, we will not be able to access your records at the meeting. We also want to know how many breakfasts to make!

Local 801

New contract for refuelers

Twenty-three members work at the Fallon Naval Air Station, refueling jets for the top gun planes. They were previously working for the contractor LB&B, but in the last year, **Louis Berger** took over the contract.

“We got some solid wage increases—4.25% in year one and 4% in years two and three—and language improvements in the new three-year contract,” says Asst. Directing Business Rep (ADBR) Director Mark Martin. “I need to thank Shop Steward Reggie Rutan for his assistance in getting the deal done.”

The members ratified the new deal in early March.

Local 1173

Talks getting started

Area Director Steve Older reports that he started negotiations with parts store **San Pablo Automotive**. “This is a renewal contract and so far we’ve held one bargaining meeting.”

Business Rep Brian Fealy says that he’s started bargaining for a new agreement at **Soscol Auto Body** in Napa.

Local 1414

San Francisco talks humming along

Twenty-seven unions represent thousands of **San Francisco city and county** workers. Together, as the Public Employee Committee (PEC), they started negotiating a new contract in February and March. After protracted talks and mediation, signs are favorable that the unions and city will be able to ratify a new contract by the June 1 expiration date. But the potential of a strike is still on the table.

Local 1414 represents 500-600 IAM members who work on city vehicles, cable cars, MUNI buses, emergency vehicles and also for the water department in the city and out at Hetch Hetchy. Area Director Pedro Mendez is heading up the team for the IAM along with Business Rep Donte Vickers and former Business Rep Art Gonzalez. “We have a tremendous committee as well, which includes two recently graduated apprentices,” says Mendez. “Hopefully they have long and strong union careers to come.”

Mendez adds that the talks have been tough because the city has a huge deficit of more than a half billion dollars. “They started out offering tiny raises, but we’ve been able to move them significantly.”

The PEC organized to have two sets of talks: at the big table, they are dealing solely with wage issues, and at the little table, they’re handling proposals around contract language and all the other major issues.

Ryder contract ratified

On March 15, the four members at Ryder Truck Rental’s Rohnert Park location ratified a new three-year agreement, reports Local 1173 Business Rep Brian Fealy.

“Improvements include annual wage increases of 5.5% in year one, and 3.5% in years two and three, plus a \$1500 bonus, an increase in the boot allowance, an increase in the time (from 90 to 180 days) allowed to acquire a Commercial Driver’s License, and we added a Mobile Maintenance premium.



The Ryder crew with their new contracts in hand.

Just in case things go south, the PEC has brought together rallies and training clinics to teach members how to prepare for a strike action. “We now have the right to strike, and the city is worried that we will do so, because we’ve shown the city that we are unified,” Mendez adds.

One huge success is that the city will no longer pay anyone less than \$25/hour, which will be a big increase for laborers and others. Now, the group at the small table are pushing to get equity increases for several classifications to make them competitive with private employers.

Mendez adds that mediation meetings have been set with each of the unions over the next few weeks to finalize the supplements. “If these are not successful, we’ll have to go to arbitration to finalize the contract.”

If there’s no strike, the talks should be concluded in early May, when the contract will go to the Board of Supervisors to get final approval.

Golden Gate talks started

Mendez says that contract renewal talks have started with the **Golden Gate Bridge, Ferry, and Bus Divisions**, where together the union represents about 65 members. This contract expires on June 30.

Local 1484

The mess that was the Mercedes Benz of San Diego contract

Area Director Kevin Kucera is still fighting a SLAPP lawsuit filed by the **Mercedes Benz** dealership over a year ago.

SLAPP refers to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, which are lawsuits brought by individuals and entities to dissuade their critics from continuing to produce negative publicity. By definition, these cases are designed to make the other party spend all of their time and resources defending the SLAPP suits.

In this case, even after the Labor Board sided with the union and ruled that the strike was legal, “the dealership is trying to take a second bite of the apple and claim that our guys broke the law by trespassing,” says Kucera.

At one point in March, the 20 scabs got so frustrated with the conditions, they tried to form a Scab union, and they put together a scab committee. They were getting ready to meet with the employer. But the attorney wouldn’t meet with them collectively because it looks too much like a union.

Early talks start

Kucera reports that the union opened up contract talks early with **Metropolitan Stevedoring Co.** in Wilmington. “We’re trying to set up some artificial deadlines to hopefully reach an agreement before the June expiration date.”

Local 1528

Talks sidelined

The nine workers at **Lock N Stitch** in Turlock were in the middle of negotiations for their first contract when the company’s lawyer took a job with another employer and caused a little slowdown for our talks, explains Business Rep Paul Abarca. “We look to get back to the table mid-April.”

Slow-going challenge

Area Director Mark Martin reports that he is currently in negotiations with **Silgan Doherty**, a can-making facility in Modesto.

“They’re exceptionally slow-going,” Martin says. “We’ve asked for a lot and the company is willing to provide very little. With Silgan, it’s always a challenge.”

Local 1546

Two years, but who’s counting?

The six members at **California Waste Solutions** finally got a contract they could ratify, and they did so in March. The company handles recycling for the city of Oakland, and this group maintains the fleet and the plant.

“We just had a really difficult time arranging bargaining meetings,” says Directing Business Rep Don Crosatto. “We’d work out a deal with the HR Director, then that person would leave and we’d have to start over. But in the end, we got a rich seven-year contract,

of which the first two years already happened. These guys can expect very large retro checks!”

Crosatto says that the contract includes cost-of-living adjustments in line with the rest of the garbage industry. Journeyman wages are now at \$52.53 per hour, with annual increases coming.

The health and welfare cap is \$400 in excess of actual costs, which Crosatto says will provide a substantial cushion for the members.

As for retirement plans, the employer will contribute an additional \$10/month into their Mike Day retirement account. Additionally, employer contributions into the AI Individual Retirement Plan, which were \$250/month four years ago, will be \$1,100/month by the end of the contract term.

“This contract was a long time coming, but it was worth the wait,” says Crosatto.

Close to first contract

In 2023, the IAM partnered with the Teamsters and the Longshore Workers to jointly organize the workers at **Urbaser**, a Spanish company that developed a large composting machine to compost organic waste. Urbaser is located on Waste Management’s Davis Street property in San Leandro.

The company expected to be up and running quickly, but that expectation has been dashed. “First, a fire forced them to lay off employees. Then, there was a gear box failure and they had to send to Germany for parts,” explains DBR Don Crosatto.

Each of the three unions are bargaining separate contracts. “While the IAM’s contract has been finalized, we can’t have a ratification vote until the other unions are ready,” Crosatto adds.

“Our agreement brings wages up to area standard. The employees will immediately move into our health plan, saving them hundreds of dollars a month and giving them better benefits. They’ll also get several more paid holidays and, by next year, they’ll move into some of our retirement plans,” Crosatto adds. “We look forward to finally welcoming these employees as new IAM members.”

THE LOCALS

Local 2182

Solid increases

The nine members who work at **Panella Trucking** in Stockton ratified a new three-year agreement that provides them with 3% of back pay for 2023, plus a 3% increase in both 2024 and 2025, reports Business Rep Paul Abarca. “They will also see a minor increase in their overtime pay. And they will maintain Plan A health and welfare benefits with the employer picking up 90% of those costs.”

Happy faces

“There were a lot of happy faces one day in March when the 45 members who work at the **City of Sacramento’s Automotive/Equipment Mechanics Group** finally received checks representing eight months of back pay from their 10% GWI increase,” reports Business Rep Paul Abarca.

UPS: Multiple Locals

Company resists local supplements

Even though UPS has always negotiated local supplements with the Machinists union and did so in 2023 with the Teamsters, they are stubbornly refusing to entertain sup-

plemental wage increases for Northern California. So far, there have been five all-day bargaining sessions between the union and UPS.

“Our members are currently earning \$45/hour, which is a great wage in many places, but is not competitive in the Bay Area or even in the Central Valley,” says ADBR Mark Martin. “In addition to the wage increases we’re seeking, we’re also looking for other financial increases, like the tool allowance. But so far, the company is resistant to adopting any of them.”

“In Oakland, the UPS facility is walking distance from Waste Management, but the wage differential, come July, will be \$9/hour. Why work at UPS when you can earn much more working down the block?”

“Further,” Crosatto adds, “we proposed a comprehensive apprenticeship training program, which is a great way build the workforce of the future. So far, the company hasn’t even responded to our proposal.”

The goal was to wrap up the 21 supplemental talks around the country in May, to be closely followed by the national talks, being held in Chicago. Directing Business Rep Don Crosatto and Area Directors Martin and Richard Breckinridge will serve on the national committee.

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Register Now!




The Machinists Institute expands across the West Coast

The Machinists Institute (MI) is a nonprofit, created by the International Association of Machinists District 751 in 2019 to fill a vital role for IAM members, employers, community partners, and other critical stakeholders in the aerospace, manufacturing, and automotive/transportation machinist industries. Initially established in Washington State, the MI has expanded its operations throughout the Western U.S. and continues to grow as an influential national leader providing world-class education and High Road Apprenticeship and training opportunities. MI has already established roots in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and is now moving into California.

While expanding the MI’s mission of lifting up current and future members of the union and the industry as a whole in California, the organization hired our own Casey Gallagher (originally from Local 1584 and District 190) to assist in this effort. Gallagher’s role as the California Regional Director is to assist the already established apprenticeship programs and grow new apprenticeship and training opportunities where they have not existed before. His goal is to ensure that the public investments coming into California for our industries will, in fact, advance and meet the needs of our sisters and brothers.

Over the last few months, he has been working closely with District 190’s leadership, Business representatives, and apprenticeship coordinators to align resources and leverage funding for the existing ap-

prenticeship programs, coordinating how we can grow new programs. At the same time, he’s working to link up how we can expand on joint efforts



to create a West Coast standard for the IAM, advancing the invaluable work IAM members do.

Along with the expansion of registered apprenticeship programs into new regions, the Institute is excited to grow our pre-apprenticeship and job readiness programs in California. In Washington State, MI has a state-recognized pre-apprenticeship program, the Machinists Institute Career

Accelerator (MICA). This program was designed and implemented to prepare community members to start their path to apprenticeship or directly enter a career in the trades. Participants in the MICA program are given training that includes an industry-recognized curriculum and are taught foundational skills in the industries we serve. The 12-week program also covers essential skills modules such as digital literacy, employability, and health and well-being. This program serves both adults as well as youth ages 16 and up. Career exploration is part of the program so that participants can make informed decisions about the career and industry that best suits their interests and abilities.

The MI aims to expand these program opportunities to current and future workers across the West Coast through a concerted campaign to boost awareness of in-demand industries and provide foundational skills that lead into family-sustaining careers.

The Machinists Institute is excited by the momentum gathering around their expansion into California and how this will expand opportunities to current and future members and, at the same time, empower workers overall in the industries the IAM represents.

To find out more about the Machinists Institute, please visit www.machinistsinstitute.org. If you or your local would like to learn more about apprenticeship opportunities—for yourself or your kids—feel free to reach out to Casey Gallagher, California Regional Director at casey.gallagher@machinistsinstitute.org.



The Machinists Institute hopes to expand the skills that IAM members offer to employers, making union workers more competitive in their industries.



IN THE NEWS

Nation's largest companies facing union drives sue to get the NLRB declared unconstitutional

Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, Jeff Bezos, chairman of Amazon, and Bryan Palbaum, CEO of Trader Joe's all have been trying to stop workers from unionizing at their companies. Now Musk, Bezos, and Palbaum have something else in common. Their companies are arguing that the agency that enforces our nation's labor laws can't protect workers' rights to organize because it is unconstitutional.

That agency – the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) – has filed numerous charges against the three CEOs' companies for violating workers' rights to organize. Rather than allow their employees to freely organize for better working conditions and wages, they have chosen to threaten these democratic values and practices.

All three companies are now arguing, in separate cases all filed in February, that, after nearly 90 years of operation, the NLRB is unconstitutional.

It's not the first time this argument has been made. In 1937 just two years after the NLRB was founded, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act. Deciding in favor of the NLRB against Jones & Laughlin Steel, the court held that Congress has the power to regulate employers whose actions affect interstate commerce.

The current cases echo the 1937 case. Then as now, the companies had fired several workers based on their union leadership, and then—and hopefully now—the NLRB will be upheld and will order the companies to rehire the workers and give them back pay.

By Adam Shah, *Jobs with Justice*

Half of recent US inflation due to high corporate profits, report finds

High corporate profits are a main driver of ongoing inflation, says a new report compiled by the progressive Groundwork Collaborative think tank and companies continue to keep prices high even as their inflationary costs drop.

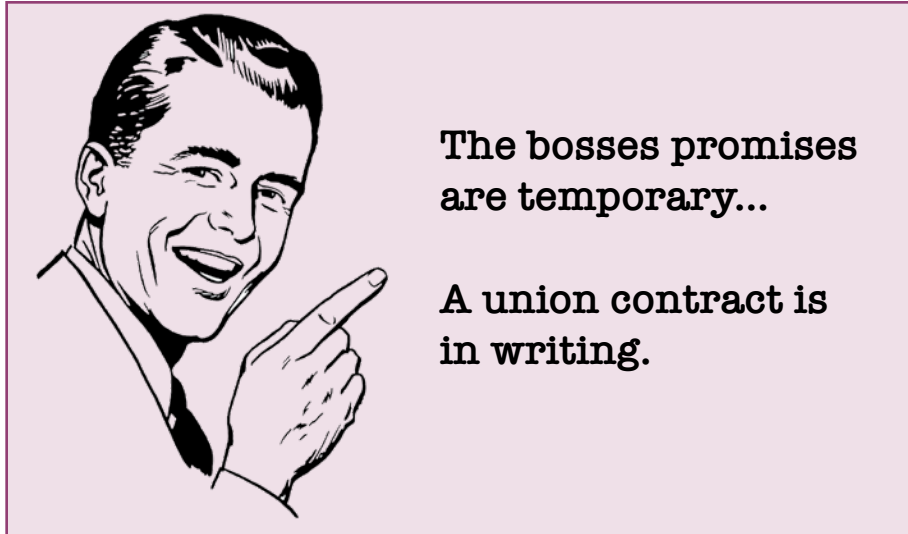
The report found corporate profits accounted for about 53% of inflation during last year's second and third quarters, while profits drove just 11% of price growth in the 40 years before the pandemic.

Prices for consumers rose by 3.4% over the past year, but input costs for producers increased by just 1%, according to the authors' calculations, which were based on data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Income and Products Accounts.

"Costs have come down substantially, and while corporations were quick to pass on their increased costs to consumers, they are, not surprisingly, less quick to pass on their savings to consumers," said Liz Pancotti, a Groundwork strategic adviser and paper co-author.

In his recent State of the Union address, President Biden took time to focus on the issue, saying, "Too many corporations raise prices to pad their profits, charging more and more for less and less" as he made his case for new efforts from Washington around issues like "shrinkflation" and price gouging.

The report's authors scoured corporate earnings calls and found executives bragging to shareholders about keeping prices high and widening profit margins as input costs come down.



The bosses promises are temporary...

A union contract is in writing.

"We've decided as a country that we like to have very large, powerful corporations and we are okay with them being very profitable," added Pancotti. "We need to take a really hard look at how our tax code incentivizes corporate profiteering and ask: 'Do we as a country want to do something about that?'"

Groundwork Collaborative

Even with historic gains in union members, union density remains low

Unions added 139,000 more workers in historic gains in 2023, but union density remains stubbornly low, with only 10 percent of American workers represented by a union as of the end of the year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

This is an all-time low and a big surprise to many, given the historic strikes by auto workers, Hollywood creatives, and Kaiser healthcare workers, according to a Washington Post analysis.

Union density vs. union membership is a frustrating comparison. Even with the historic membership growth, the country added 2.7 million jobs in 2023, many of them non-union, meaning the membership growth couldn't keep up with the overall job numbers.

A more compelling number that bodes well for the future is public support for unions. Support for unions hit 71 percent in 2023 amid

record contract victories and organizing drives that have hit Starbucks, Amazon, and other businesses.

According to a Pew Research study conducted last spring, the majority of adults in the U.S. say that the decline in union representation is somewhat or very bad for the country and for working people.

However, that study also showed a wide partisan difference: more than 75 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents see the decline of unions as bad for the country. But among Republicans and GOP-leaning independents, only 40-45 percent say the decline is bad

for the country or for working people.

The fleecing of America's hourly workers

More than 200,000 workers across the country are owed \$163.3 million in back pay, according to a website maintained by the Department of Labor (DOL). This is money companies have paid after they were found liable for wage theft violations — like withholding tips from workers — that has not been claimed. Workers who believe they are owed wages can check the DOL website, Worker Owed Wages. Other forms of wage theft include pressuring workers to work off the clock, cutting lunch breaks short, deliberately paying below the minimum wage, and failing to pay overtime.

Currently, the largest amount of unclaimed back wages is in food services. More than 36,000 food service workers have yet to claim wages that they are owed, USA Today reports. DOL data reveals that since 2020, investigators have recovered more than \$130 million in back wages in the industry.

In November 2023, officials ordered Plaza Azteca, an East Coast restaurant chain, to pay "\$11.4 million in back wages and liquidated damages for more than 1,000 employees." According to the DOL, the restaurant was aware of its "legal



UNION-MADE

Union-made Mother's Day Gifts



You have no excuse for waiting until the last minute to find a nice gift for Mother's Day that also carries the union label. Here's another great list compiled by Labor411.org, which is celebrating its 25th year of supporting union workers by educating the public about the products that union members produce.

Chocolates

Ghirardelli
Hershey's
Russell Stover
See's Candies

Health and beauty products:

Dove Beauty Bar & skin care
Caress skin care
L'Oréal Paris
Revlon

Delightful beverages

André
Arbor Mist
C.K. Mondavi
Charles Krug
Cook's California Champagne
J. Roget
Gallo Estate
Peter Vella
Sheffield Cellars
Turning Leaf
Wycliff

Flowers

(buy from these union stores):

Albertsons
Costco
Gelson's
Pavilions
Ralphs
Safeway
Vons

Also, Union Plus members receive a 25% discount on flowers from Teleflora.



IN THE NEWS

obligation to pay workers minimum wage and overtime...and yet, willfully disregarded federal law.”

Other “low wage, high violation” industries include health-care and construction. Home health-care, in particular, has been a central focus of the DOL’s Wage and Hour Division (WHD). Last year, the WHD recovered more than \$67 million in back wages across both industries, officials report. In June 2023, a federal court ordered a Philadelphia-based home care agency to “pay more than \$7 million in back wages and liquidated damages,” nearly two years after the department filed a case against the company.

These figures, while significant, are only the tip of the iceberg. In 2014, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimated that wage theft costs workers more than \$50 billion per year, most of which was unreported. A 2023 CBS investigation found that “[o]ften, employers threaten to report workers who complain of wage theft to immigration.” Those who do come forward often wait months, sometimes years, for the resolution of their complaint. But even if they win their claims, it’s not guaranteed that they’ll see their owed wages. CBS found that “more than a third of those successful cases—totaling nearly a billion dollars—showed no money was ever recovered.”

Part of the issue is the declining number of labor inspectors. For industrial market economies like the U.S., the International Labor Organization sets a standard of one or more inspectors for every 10,000 workers. But, “as of 2008, the United States had one inspector per 75,000 workers.”

Judd Legum and Tesnim Zekeria
Popular Information

Starbucks Stops Opposing Its Baristas’ Union

“This is what we’ve always wanted,” says Michelle Eisen, a Starbucks barista who’s been with the company since 2010 and works at the Buffalo outlet that was the first to vote to go union, back in 2021. “We wanted Starbucks to actually be the company they always said they were.”

In March, Starbucks may have finally become just that. In a joint announcement released by both Starbucks and Workers United, the baristas’ union that is part of SEIU, the company agreed “to begin discussions on a foundational framework designed to achieve ... collective bargaining agreements for represented stores and partners.”

The somewhat operatic language raised some questions about whether this was just more delay to a first contract. But the Prospect has learned that Starbucks has affirmatively agreed to bargain with workers and their representatives to craft a master contract that applies to all unionized outlets, to be augmented,

if necessary, by add-on contracts dealing with issues specific to particular outlets.

To demonstrate its good faith to understandably skeptical workers, the company also agreed to let them receive credit card tipping and also receive the back pay from the raises and benefits the company had given to all its employees, except those in outlets that had voted to go union.

After decades of decline, the American union movement has seen a dramatic uptick in the past couple of years, with a wave of unionizations among difficult-to-replace professional workers (university teaching assistants, hospital interns, and residents); a landmark contract for unionized autoworkers; and rulings from President Biden’s NLRB that enable workers to win back some of their organizing rights.

But organizing and winning contracts for the kind of workers who can be replaced, whom managers have routinely fired when they seek to join or form unions, has still presented a nearly insuperable obstacle. And as a result, union density hasn’t budged amid these victories.

This is why Starbucks’ announcement is the single most important breakthrough American workers have achieved in a very long time. Until then, workers in industries such as fast food or other parts of the service sector appeared to be all but unorganizable, so fierce, suc-

cessful, and routine was management’s opposition to such initiatives. During the more than two years since the Buffalo baristas voted to go union (since followed by baristas at nearly

400 other Starbucks outlets, out of the 9,000 that the company owns), the company has faithfully followed the union-busters playbook, firing work-

ers who led organizing campaigns, refusing to bargain with workers who’d voted to go union (who now total roughly 10,000), and withholding raises from them.

Despite that, the workers persisted. In recent weeks, baristas at 21 outlets all filed for unionization elections on the same day, and a slate of three pro-worker notables (including Wilma Liebman, who chaired the NLRB during the Obama administration) have been running for Starbucks board director seats at the company’s annual shareholders’ meeting, to be held in April.

The grounds on which the company and union came together was a mediation process to settle a company suit and a union countersuit over some workers’ use of the word “Starbucks” to identify themselves during an action they took in opposition to the ongoing Gaza war. Over just the past week, that mediation broadened to include settling the underlying disputes between the company and its workers. It was only after the release of the joint statement, that the baristas learned that a larger agreement had been reached.

“Our initial reaction was shock,” says Eisen. “And then tears—lots of tears, of disbelief and then relief.”

Unions are more popular today than they’ve been in 60 years, and young workers are overwhelmingly pro-union. Over the past two years, 90 percent of thousands of university student employees who’ve participated in unionization elections have voted to go union, and I suspect we may see a similar rate at hundreds and perhaps thousands more Starbucks outlets now that the company has said it will work toward a master agreement for unionized shops.

By Harold Meyerson,
The American Prospect

EPA Bans Asbestos: Long Overdue, But More Work to Be Done

In March, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took a long-awaited and long-overdue action to ban the import and use of asbestos in this country. This is good news for IAM members who work on automotive brakes, which until now may have still contained the deadly substance.

The asbestos ban was particularly welcome, coming 33 years after a federal court blocked the agency’s initial attempt to ban the cancer-causing substance. Even though most uses of asbestos (such as building insulation) were banned decades ago, EPA estimates that asbestos, which “is known to cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, ovarian cancer, and laryngeal cancer... is still linked to more than 40,000 deaths in the U.S. each year” from exposures that occurred years ago. Over 50 countries have already banned asbestos.

The ban was made possible by a 2016 revision of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The original TSCA passed in 1976, required the agency to regulate asbestos in a way that was “least burdensome” to industry.

The chlorine industry had used that language to successfully oppose a ban, claiming that without asbestos in chlorine production, there would be no clean water. People would die. Western Civilization would fall. When the agency enacted an asbestos ban in 1989, it carved out an exemption for the mineral’s use in the chlorine industry. However, the industry’s dire predictions are belied by the fact that two-thirds of the chlorine now produced in the U.S. is produced without using asbestos.

The Trump administration cut EPA’s budget and refused to anger its industry friends. But the Biden administration moved forward.

The new regulation bans the use of asbestos in oilfield brake blocks, aftermarket automotive brakes and linings, other vehicle friction products, and other gaskets six months after the effective date of the final rule.

Jordan Barab, Confined Space

FAST FACTS

\$433 million

The amount employers spend per year on “union-avoidance” consultants, who receive a minimum of \$350 per hour to defeat union organizing efforts.

Source: Economic Policy Institute, 2023



UNION JOB BOARD

Here’s a list of some of the jobs available at IAM shops. If you’re interested in making more money or changing location, start here or contact your business representative.

Cemex is hiring mechanics in San Francisco. \$50/hour, \$1,100/month, 401K, AI Health and Welfare Plan A, fully paid by the company.

George Martin Co. in Emeryville is looking for production workers and machinists. Entry level jobs pay from \$23-30/hour.

Waste Management’s Davis Street Transfer Station in San Leandro needs two plant maintenance journeyman mechanics—probably swing shift. These positions pay \$52.92/hour. Look for them at WMJobs.com

UPS in San Bruno and South San Francisco (and likely several other locations) are looking for plant mechanics. They pay in the \$44/hour range, offer the IAM National pension & the AI pension. To apply, go to ups.com/careers.

Harborland 2C is looking for a manual machinist in Oakland. The journeyman contract rate is \$33.35 plus health & welfare and pension. It’s a new position so rate may change. To apply, contact solder1546@sbcglobal.net or Mark Wilson at the company @ 510-917-5532

Attn: Local 653 members

Local 653 Members:

Proposals to change the Local's Bylaws had to be referred to the Bylaw Committee via the Recording Secretary before the March membership meeting. Proposed amendments will be read at the regular membership meeting on April 18 at the union hall: 5726 E. Shields Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727. The vote on all proposals will be held at the May 15 membership meeting at the same location.

Note about union meetings

Some union meetings are being held in person, others may be hybrid, meaning you may also attend on Zoom or other video-conferencing program. If you wish to attend online, check with your Local to ensure you have the web address and are properly registered.

Official Notice of Nomination and Election of Delegates to the Grand Lodge Convention

Local Lodges 653, 801, 1101, 1173, 1414, 1484, 1528, 1546, 1584, & 2182

At the regular monthly meeting of each Local Lodge in the month of April a nomination of delegates and alternate delegates to the 41st Grand Lodge Convention shall be held. Election of delegates and alternates will be held at the May meetings.

The convention will be held September 1-6 in New York City For more info, go to: convention.goiam.org.

Local Lodge meeting dates, times and locations can be found below, on this page.

Absentee Ballot Procedure

In accordance with Election of Delegates, Article II, Section 3 of the IAM Constitution, members who reside in outlying districts more than 25 miles from the designated balloting place, members who are either confined because of verified illness or on leave qualifying under U.S and Canadian family leave laws,

or on vacation, or on official IAM business approved by the Local Lodge, District Lodge or Grand Lodge, or on an employer travel assignment, or reserve military leave, as the case may be, shall be furnished absentee ballots.

Any member entitled to receive an absentee ballot must request a ballot in writing. The Request for Absentee Ballot must be delivered to the Recording Secretary of your Local Lodge in person or by mail no later than ten (10) days prior to the election. See address below.

Your written request for absentee ballot must include the following: "Please send me an absentee ballot." Name - Address - City/State/Zip - Book # - Your Signature. You must also include the reason you are making the request.

Completed Absentee Ballots for your Local Lodge elections must be received by the Local Lodge prior to the close of voting at your Local Lodge's meeting in May.

UNION MEETINGS

District Lodge 190

10260 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94605
510-632-3661

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month

April 23 • May 28 • June 25 • July 23

Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

General Delegates' Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Local 1484

1261 Avalon Blvd.
Wilmington, CA 90744
310-835-6688

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

April 18 • May 16 • June 20 • July 18

General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month

April 2 • May 7 • June 4 • July 2

Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: April 17 • May 15 • June 19 • July 17

Local 653

5726 E. Shields Avenue
Fresno, CA 93727
559-264-2815

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month

April 17 • May 15 • June 19 • July 17

Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.

Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Local Lodge Meetings will be held both in person and on zoom. If you plan to attend in person, please RSVP so staff can ensure there's enough food. If you want to attend on zoom, you must send a personal email to iama653@comcast.net. Be sure to provide your first and last name and the shop you work at in the email. Once you do, you will receive an invite to the zoom meeting.

Local 1528

713 16th Street
Modesto, CA 95354
209-529-9210
machinists2182@gmail.com

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month

April 3 • May 1 • June 5 • July 3

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Shop Steward Meeting: 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month

April 20 • May 18 • June 15 • July 20

Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

Local 801

8201 Capwell Drive
Oakland, CA 94621
800-655-2182

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

April 18 • May 16 • June 20 • July 18

Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

Local 1546

10260 MacArthur Blvd.,
Oakland, CA 94605
510-638-6705

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month

April 2 • May 7 • June 4 • July 2

General Membership Meeting & E Board Meetings: 5:30 p.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 9 a.m. every Saturday

Local 1101

2102 Almaden Rd., #105
San Jose, CA 95125
408-440-8716

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month

April 9 • May 14 • June 11 • July 9

Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.

General Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Meetings will be held on the Bluejeans App for the foreseeable future. Email: aab1101@att.net to learn how to join in.

Meetings are hybrid - you can join in person or on zoom. Email zr1zo6@sbcglobal.net to learn how to join in on zoom.

Local 1173

1900 Bates Ave., # H
Concord, CA 94520
925-687-6421
LL1173@sbcglobal.net

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month

April 11 • May 9 • June 13 • July 11

Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

on the second Thursday of the month

April 11 • May 9 • June 13 • July 11

Meetings will be held on zoom and in person at the Concord office. Contact Cindy at the Local at 925-687-6421 for zoom address and passcode.

Local 1584

10260 MacArthur Blvd.,
Oakland, CA 94605
510-638-6705

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

April 18 • May 16 • June 20 • July 18

Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month:

April 2 • May 7 • June 4 • July 2

Meetings will be hybrid (in person and on zoom) for the foreseeable future. Email Tom.Swanger@atlas-pacific.com to learn how to join in on zoom.

Local 1414

150 South Boulevard
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-341-2689

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month

April 11 • May 9 • June 13 • July 11

General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month via Zoom. Please contact the office for the meeting link.

April 18 • May 16 • June 20 • July 18

Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome!

June 3 • September 4 • December 4

Local 2182

967 Venture Court
Sacramento, CA 95825
916-929-1040
For dues questions, call
Debbie Bird: 559-269-6386
machinists2182@gmail.com

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month

April 9 • May 14 • June 11 • July 9

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Retirees' VISTA CLUB: 11:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month:

April 17 • May 15 • June 19 • July 17